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ABSTRACT

One year ago the Bay Area China Education Project (BAYCEP) was begun by specialists in Asian Studies from Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley. The purposes of BAYCEP are to develop a series of programs which will encourage the use of China-related materials in elementary and secondary schools and improve the methods and content of precollegiate teaching about China. BAYCEP staff members work as consultants to Bay Area elementary or secondary teachers who request their help. In addition to consulting, BAYCEP staff develop materials useful to teachers; two available products are an annotated bibliography (ED 092 469) of easily available materials on China and a short unit entitled Misunderstanding China (ED 092 421), focusing on the dispelling of stereotypes. The unit is highly adaptable and can be modified to meet the requirements of almost any classroom situation. For teachers who wish more indepth background preparation on China, BAYCEP conducts workshops in both content and additional teaching techniques. While BAYCEP is currently focusing on China, the associates hope to expand their services on other countries, with the next concentration to be Japan. (Author/JR)

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Bringing China to the Classroom

China is in! With U.S.-China relations improved, Americans have developed a new interest in the People's Republic of China and its people. Naturally social studies teachers would like to capitalize on the current fascination with the country, but few teachers are prepared to teach a unit, much less a complete course, on this long-mysterious land. Many teachers are not even certain where to obtain timely and useful information on present-day mainland China.

In the San Francisco Bay Area there is help for teachers who wish to incorporate a study of China into their curriculum. One year ago the Bay Area China Education Project, BAYCEP, was begun by specialists in Asian studies from Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley. The purposes of BAYCEP are to develop a series of programs which will (1) encourage the use of China-related materials in elementary and secondary schools, and (2) improve the methods and content of precollegiate teaching about China. The BAYCEP staff works in a consulting capacity with any Bay Area elementary or secondary teacher who requests their help.

Since its origin, BAYCEP has served more than 4,000 students and 200 teachers in 58 schools located within the San Francisco area. Participants in the program feel they are just beginning to tap an exciting potential for cooperative efforts between university specialists and classroom teachers.

BAYCEP BEGINS

The idea of a joint program between university scholars and classroom teachers originated with a group of graduate students in the Asian studies programs at Stanford and Berkeley. In their graduate studies, the students came into contact with materials and information on China which they felt would be useful to precollegiate teachers and students, however, they found there was no channel for directing their specialized knowledge into the K-12 system. Such a channel was found when Stanford Professor John Lewis arranged a conference which brought together China scholars, classroom teachers, and representatives of China-oriented community programs. The teachers at the meeting were eager to learn more about China and about sources of information on the country.

Based on these early efforts, the students, with the help of Lewis, were able to secure a starting grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a second grant from the National Committee on United States-China Relations, a nonprofit educational organization which encourages better understanding between the two countries. The grant funds provided small salaries for seven graduate students who became the project staff as well as a budget for purchasing materials. Dr. Victor H. Li, Director of the Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford, was enlisted as chairman of the steering committee, and BAYCEP officially began.

The new BAYCEP staff decided their first step must be to train themselves to work as consultants with the classroom teachers they would serve. Only one staff member, David Grossman, project coordinator, had previous teaching experience; the other project associates were Asian specialists, but they were not familiar with teaching practices or techniques.

In the fall of 1973 a teacher-training course was held for all project staff. In directing the course, Grossman sought to familiarize the BAYCEP staff with the capabilities, as well as the limitations, of classroom teachers. The goal was to help the staff develop a flexible consulting service able to adapt to the specific needs of individual teachers.

In addition to participation in the training course, the BAYCEP staff began developing materials which would be useful to teachers. Their first product was the *Bay Area Resources on China: A Guide for Teachers*, an annotated bibliography of easily available materials on China. The bibliography includes information on grade level and possible classroom uses of the materials listed.

The staff also developed a short unit of study entitled "Misunderstanding China." This unit, based on a CBS film of the same name, focuses on stereotype images of Chinese held by many Americans and attempts to dispel these stereotypes. Included in the unit are suggestions for discussion questions to be used with the CBS film and a number of classroom activities. "Misunderstanding China" is highly adaptable and can be modified to meet the requirements of almost any classroom situation.

With training completed and two products available, the BAYCEP staff was ready to offer its services to area teachers. They began announcing their availability by attending local educational meetings and by contacting social studies department chairmen. Requests for consultation soon started coming into the BAYCEP offices.

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WORKING WITH TEACHERS

"Most classroom teachers do not want to become China experts. What they want is enough material and information to prepare a good study unit on China." This is the conclusion reached by William Joseph, project associate, and his colleagues after a year of working in Bay Area schools. Based on this fact, the BAYCEP staff has structured its services accordingly.

When the BAYCEP staff is contacted for consultation, one of the project associates goes to the school for a meeting with one or more teachers. After discussing the teachers' needs and classroom situations, the associate offers a number of options. If the teachers are interested only in locating information with which to do their own planning, the associate may give them a *Resource Guide* and perhaps loan them materials from the BAYCEP library. For teachers who wish to use the "Misunderstanding China" unit, the associate may suggest some adaptations for their particular classrooms. In several instances BAYCEP consultants have worked with curriculum planners and developed extensive study units for school-wide use.

Project associates are also available for some in-class work with the regular classroom teacher. Two of the associates have visited mainland China, and they often share their experiences with students in the classrooms they visit. Other associates are Chinese-Americans who relate their personal perspectives to students.

For teachers who wish more in-depth background preparation on China, BAYCEP conducts a number of workshops in the area, both during the school year and the summer months; teachers can earn college credit for attending some of these workshops. The longer workshop periods allow teachers to explore China in more depth as well as to learn additional techniques for presenting China in the classroom.

In assessing the range of services offered teachers, BAYCEP staff members conclude, "We offer a few teachers a lot of help, and we offer a lot of teachers a little help. Our goal is to remain flexible enough to accommodate the needs of as many people as possible."

CHINA IN THE CLASSROOM

The BAYCEP staff has worked with teachers and students at all levels, although most of their work has been with seventh through twelfth graders. In every instance the BAYCEP staff tries to demystify China, to make the country and its people more real to students.

At the elementary and junior high levels, much emphasis is placed on letting the children experience the Chinese culture. Children love to use chopsticks, taste Chinese food, do Chairman Mao's four-minute exercises, and make Chinese kites. The Chinese language becomes less imposing as children learn to write a few characters and even say a few words of Chinese. Students practice the art of calligraphy, learn to play Chinese games, and design paper dragons. BAYCEP has some of the books used by Chinese school children available for the students to examine and compare with their own texts.

While the students are participating in such activities, teachers point out that Americans often consider Chinese customs "strange," because they are different from American customs. In studying an overview of China geography and history students are helped to understand that Chinese customs and values developed because they suited the needs of the Chinese people.

Elementary and junior high students have responded enthusiastically to China studies. Teachers note that the children "sit still, cooperate, and ask questions"--all good indications of their interest. One young student expressed his feelings about studying China by saying, "I like to learn about the Chinese. I still don't get the chopsticks, but I like the exercises and the dragons."

Sheila Abdallah, junior high teacher, reports her students responded well to their nine-week China unit. She adds, "Without the help of BAYCEP, I would never have had the confidence to undertake a China study at this grade level. I didn't know enough about China to even get started."

High school students enjoy participating in many of the same activities as younger students, but the BAYCEP staff is developing some special mini-units to offer for older students. These units, presently in the pilot stage, include "Education in China," "Demystifying the Chinese Language," and "Drugs in China." The staff is also preparing a China Kit which will include materials translated from the Chinese language and be accompanied by a teacher's guide.

William Dransfield, a high school instructor who teaches China as a six-week unit, has used many materials and techniques suggested by BAYCEP and has called on BAYCEP associates to serve as resource speakers. He feels their help has been important because China is a sensitive area, and it is important that information be factual as well as interesting. "BAYCEP members directed me to materials I probably wouldn't have found on my own," Dransfield states.

Reaction of high school students to China studies has been positive. They give high marks to activities such as food preparation, the four-minute exercises, and a simulation game, *Starpower*. Many also note that the unit has been important in "wiping away stereotypes" and learning what the Chinese are really like. One student wrote, "At the end of the unit I almost felt like I had been to China. I really would like to visit China someday."

Practice using chopsticks

Role play Chinese laborers making mud bricks

Classroom Teachers in BAYCEP Workshops

Try their hand at calligraphy

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Participate in Chairman Mao's 4-minute exercises

Make candles Chinese style

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WHAT'S NEXT FOR BAYCEP?

The BAYCEP staff feels their program is well-established now; they have many contacts in the area schools, and they have a good insight into the kinds of information and services teachers want. What's next for BAYCEP? Staff members cite expansion and innovation as their immediate goals.

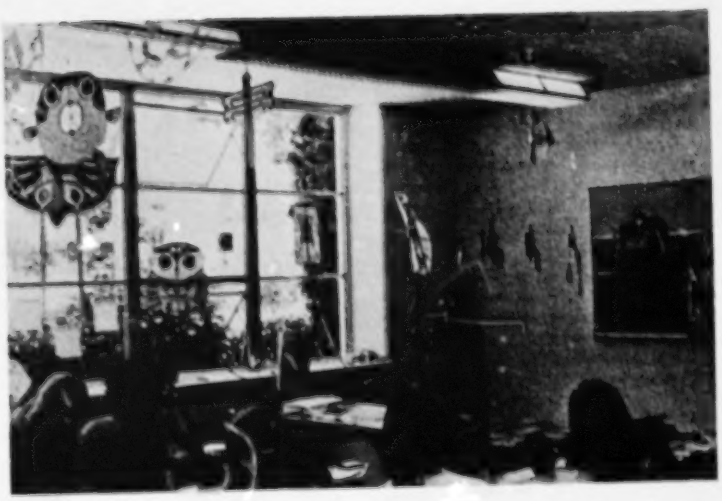
During the next year, BAYCEP hopes to increase the number of teacher workshops. A five-da course, held at Dominican College in June 1974, attracted 200 teachers and was enthusiastically received. It is hoped that more teachers and department staffs will participate in similar training sessions. The staff also hopes to finish developing the mini-units and to publish them in a China Kit which can be used in whole or in part by classroom teachers.

While China is the major focus of BAYCEP, the associates hope eventually to branch out into studies of other countries, with the next concentration to be Japan. There are plans for expansion of services, but staff members do not want BAYCEP to grow too rapidly. They believe the keys to their success have been (1) their ability to deliver what they promise teachers, and (2) their mobility and flexibility. BAYCEP will not expand beyond these capabilities.

For educators who are interested in developing a concept such as BAYCEP, the San Francisco staff has some thoughts. First, staff members note that in 1974 the U.S. Office of Education funded 50 international studies centers in universities around the nation. Part of the function of these centers is to offer comprehensive programs to elementary and secondary schools. Classroom teachers who are interested in having services such as those provided by BAYCEP might begin by contacting the international studies center of a nearby university.

Secondly, while BAYCEP has focused on China, the staff feels the BAYCEP concept is not limited to China studies. If another country is of more interest to teachers, or if a university's international studies department specializes in another geographical area, the BAYCEP concept could easily be applied to those interests.

The Bay Area China Education Project was begun because university specialists felt they had information that would be useful to classroom teachers. Classroom teachers had the ability to adapt the specialized information for use in their elementary and secondary situations. By joining forces, the two groups of educators are providing the students of the San Francisco Bay Area with a fresh insight into an important force in their world.



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ERIC DOCUMENTS

ED 092 469 - **Bay Area Resources on China: A Guide for Teachers.** By Bay Area China Education Project. 59 pp. MF - $1.75, HC - $1.85. The teacher's guide discussed in the above Profile. It contains a listing of resources useful to any classroom teacher interested in teaching about China.

ED 092 421 - **"Misunderstanding China" Unit.** By Bay Area China Education Project. 9 pp. MF - $.75, HC - $1.50. This is the unit described in the above profile. It is designed around the use of the film, "Misunderstanding China," and is a secondary level study of American stereotypes of China.

ED 091 068 - **The Chinese in Children's Books.** 30 pp. Available from New York Public Library, The Branch Libraries, 8 East 40th St., New York, New York 10016 - $2.00. This is a selective annotated list of children's books about China and the Chinese: Included in the list are 37 books published in the Chinese language.

ED 090 098 - **Area Studies: China.** By Virginia Blouin et al. 62 pp. MF - $.75, HC - $3.15. The guide outlines a course of study for elementary students on the history, geography, language, and general culture of China. Games, maps, sample guide questions for films, a dramatic skit depicting a Chinese school, readings, and a multiple choice test are included in the appendix.

For further information, write:

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